

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEA-10 EA-10
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
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CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 2762

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

BERN FOR AMBASSADOR WARNKE

DEPT PLS PASS INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, XO, KE, US, UR
SUBJECT: PRESS EDITORIAL CRITICIZES US-SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN
INDIAN OCEAN

1. LEAD EDITORIAL IN FEBRUARY 22 DAILY NATION LAMBASTED
RECENTLY CONCLUDED ROUND OF US-SOVIET TALKS ON INDIAN
OCEAN AND ATTACKED US AND SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN
INDIAN OCEAN.

2. EDITORIAL REPORTED THAT TALKS HAD ENDED WITHOUT
AGREEMENT ON ANYTHING. IT CHARACTERIZED AGENDA AS
VERGING ON CHILDISHNESS BECAUSE OF PREOCCUPATION WITH
WHAT WERE DESCRIBED AS "ELEMENTARY" FACTORS.

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3. EDITORIAL CLAIMED THAT TWO MAJOR POWERS MOVED
INTO AREA IN AFTERMATH OF BRITISH EAST OF SUEZ PULL-
BACK, EACH IN PURSUIT OF ITS PERCEIVED INTERESTS, BUT
THAT PRACTICAL RESULT WAS EXTENSION OF THEIR INTER-
NATIONAL RIVALRY INTO AREA. THIS WAS DESPITE FACT THAT
MOST INDIAN OCEAN NATIONS (SOMALIA EXCEPTED) HAVE

BOJECTED TO RUSSIAN AND US NAVAL PRESENCE IN AREA. EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT "....IT IS ESTABLISHED FACT THAT WHENEVER EITHER OF THESE POWERS HAVE MOVED INTO AN AREA WHERE IT IS NOT GENERALLY WELCOME, CONFLICT RESULTS BETWEEN THE TWO POWERS AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN VICINITY."

4. EDITORIAL CONNLUDED THAT US AND SOVIET UNION SHOULD MOVE OUT OF INDIAN OCEAN IN INTEREST OF PEACE AND THAT INDIAN OCEAN NATIONS SHOULD THEN AGREE THAT BIG POWER PRRESENCE IS UNDESIRABLE AND SHOULD ASK THEM TO LEAVE.

5. COMMENT: GOK OFFICIALS IN MEDIA HAVE GIVEN PUBLIC SUPPORT TO INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT SINCE ITS INCEPTION. HOWEVER, IN PAST PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT KENYA REGARDED IT AS IMPORTANT THAT US NOT WITHDRAW FROM INDIAN OCEAN ON UNILATERAL BASIS LEAVING NAVAL PREDOMINANCE IN AREA TO SOVIET UNION. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, PERMSEC IN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, WHO SITS ON NATIONAL SECURIY COUNCIL WHILE FONMIN DOES NOT, HAS EXPRESSED PRIVATELY GOK GRATITUDE FOR AND TACIT APPROVAL OF US NAVAL PRESENCE IN AREA. MINISTRY OF DEFENCE HAS FACILITATED USE OF MOMBASA PORT AND NAIROBI/MOMBASA AIRFIELDS TO SUPPORT USN MIDEASTFOR
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AND CINCPACFLT P-3 FLIGHTS EMANATING FROM DIEGO GARCIA.

6. IN THIS CONTEXT, DAILY NATIONA EDITORIAL CAN BE INTERPRETED AS OUT OF STEP WITH PREVAILING VIEW AT TOP LEVEL OF GOK. BUT WE WERE STRUCK WITH EDITORIAL'S RELATIVE STRIDENCY AND WITH JUXTAPOSITION ON EQUAL BASIS OF US AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AREA. OVER PAST FEW YEARS, KENYAN PRESS IN TREATMENT OF THIS GENERAL ISSUE HAS CONVEYED VIEW THAT US PRESENCE IN DIEGO GARCIA WAS IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET BASE AT BERBERA, SOMALIA. ONUS FOR MILITARIZATION IN INDIAN OCEAN HAS THEREBY BEEN LAID SQUARELY ON SOVIET UNION. BUT GEOPOLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED IN THAT SOVIET UNION IS NO LONGER IN BERBERA, AND IS NO LONGER ARMING AND SUPPORTING SOMALIA, WHICH KENYA HAS ALWAYS PERCEIVED AS A POTENTIAL THREAT. TO CONTRARY, SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN EXERTING GREAT EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT SOMALIA'S MILITARY DEFEAT. NOTION THAT FRIENDS OF OUR (KENYA'S)FRIENDS SHOULD BE OUR FRIENDS AND FRIENDS OF OUR (KENYA'S) ENEMIES SHOULD BE OUR ENEMIES HAS BEEN GIVEN CURRENCY IN PAST WEEKS HERE, NOTABLY BY PROMINENT WEEKLY REVIEW AND SUNDAY TIMES EDITOR, HILARY NG'WENO.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT COULD BE THAT THIS EDITORIAL
REPRESENTS GOK DESIRE FOR TIME BEING TO BE LESS OPENLY
PARTISAN ON ISSUES WITH EAST-WEST IMPLICATIONS SUCH AS
US-SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN.
LEMELLE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE.

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